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THE ANSWERING VOICE

ONE HUNDRED LOVE LYRICS BY WOMEN

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SELECTED BY
SARA TEASDALE
AUTHOR OF "RIVERS TO THE SEA," "HELEN OF TROY, AND OTHER POEMS," ETC.

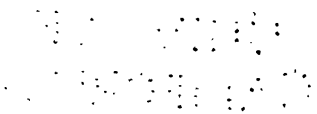


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Published September 1917



THE HAPPY LABOR
OF SELECTING THESE POEMS
I DEDICATE TO
MY SISTER

377535

Ἔρος δαῦτέ μ' ὁ λυσιμέλης δόνει
γλυκύπικρον ἀμάχανον ὄρπετον.

"*O gods, what love, what yearning, contributed to this.*"

PREFATORY NOTE

I HAVE tried to bring together in this book the most beautiful love-lyrics written in English by women since the middle of the last century. During this period, for the first time in the history of English literature, the work of women has compared favorably with that of men; and in no other field have they done such noteworthy work as in poetry. Before this period, for reasons well known to the student of feminism, sincere love poems by women were very rare in England and America. With the exception of Lady Barnard's "Auld Robin Gray" and a poem by Susanna Blamire, I have found nothing that seemed worthy of inclusion.

In most cases the finest utterance of women poets has been on love, so that this book is, I venture to hope, a golden treasury of lyrics by women.

I have included no long poems, and no translations, and I have avoided poems in which the poet dramatized a man's feelings rather than her own.

I want to acknowledge very gratefully my in-

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THE ANSWERING VOICE

SOMEWHERE OR OTHER

SOMEWHERE or other there must surely be
 The face not seen, the voice not heard,
The heart that not yet — never yet — ah, me!
 Made answer to my word.

Somewhere or other, maybe near or far;
 Past land and sea, clean out of sight;
Beyond the wandering moon, beyond the star
 That tracks her night by night.

Somewhere or other, maybe far or near;
 With just a wall, a hedge, between;
With just the last leaves of the dying year
 Fallen on a turf grown green.

Christina Rossetti

THE BIRCH TREE AT LOSCHWITZ

At Loschwitz above the city
The air is sunny and chill;
The birch trees and the pine trees
Grow thick upon the hill.

Lone and tall, with silver stem,
A birch tree stands apart;
The passionate wind of spring-time
Stirs in its leafy heart.

I lean against the birch tree,
My arms around it twine;
It pulses, and leaps, and quivers,
Like a human heart to mine.

One moment I stand, then sudden
Let loose mine arms that cling:
O God! the lonely hillside,
The passionate wind of spring!

Amy Levy

TO ONE UNKNOWN

I HAVE seen the proudest stars
That wander on through space,
Even the sun and moon,
But not your face.

I have heard the violin,
The winds and waves rejoice
In endless minstrelsy;
Yet not your voice.

I have touched the trillium,
Pale flower of the land,
Coral, anemone,
And not your hand.

I have kissed the shining feet
Of Twilight lover-wise,
Opened the gates of Dawn —
Oh, not your eyes!

The Answering Voice

I have dreamed unwonted things,
Visions that witches brew,
Spoken with images,
Never with you.

Helen Dudley

"I HAVE WANDERED TO A SPRING"

I HAVE wandered to a spring in the forest green
and dim,
The sweet quiet stirs about me —
The water twinkles at me,
As I stoop to dip my cup,
As I stoop to drink — to him.

True, I 'm only half in earnest — I touch the cool,
wet brim —
He 'd laugh if he could see me —
I 'm glad he does n't see me,
As alone with my queer gladness,
I stoop to drink — to him.

Edna Wahlert McCourt

LOVE ME AT LAST

Love me at last, or if you will not,
Leave me;
Hard words could never, as these half-words,
Grieve me:
Love me at last — or leave me.

Love me at last, or let the last word uttered
Be but your own;
Love me, or leave me — as a cloud, a vapor,
Or a bird flown.
Love me at last — I am but sliding water
Over a stone.

Alice Corbin

RED MAY

Out of the window the trees in the Square
 Are covered with crimson May —
You, that were all of my love and my care,
 Have broken my heart to-day.

But though I have lost you and though I despair
 Till even the past looks gray —
Out of the window the trees in the Square
 Are covered with crimson May.

A. Mary F. Robinson

LOVE IS A TERRIBLE THING

I WENT out to the farthest meadow,
I lay down in the deepest shadow;

And I said unto the earth, "Hold me,"
And unto the night, "O enfold me,"

And unto the wind petulantly
I cried, "You know not for you are free!"

And I begged the little leaves to lean
Low and together for a safe screen;

Then to the stars I told my tale:
"That is my home-light, there in the vale,

"And O, I know that I shall return,
But let me lie first mid the unfeeling fern.

"For there is a flame that has blown too near,
And there is a name that has grown too dear,
And there is a fear . . ."

Love is a Terrible Thing

And to the still hills and cool earth and far sky
I made moan,
"The heart in my bosom is not my own!

"O would I were free as the wind on wing;
Love is a terrible thing!"

Grace Fallow Norton

A CONNAUGHT LAMENT

I WILL arise and go hence to the west,
And dig me a grave where the hill-winds call;
But oh, were I dead, were I dust, the fall
Of my own love's footstep would break my rest!

My heart in my bosom is black as a sloe!
I heed not cuckoo, nor wren, nor swallow:
Like a flying leaf in the sky's blue hollow
The heart in my breast is, that beats so low.

Because of the words your lips have spoken,
(O dear black head that I must not follow)
My heart is a grave that is stripped and hollow,
As ice on the water my heart is broken.

O lips forgetful and kindness fickle,
The swallow goes south with you: I go west
Where fields are empty and scythes at rest.
I am the poppy and you the sickle;
My heart is broken within my breast.

Nora Chesson

VOS NON VOBIS

THERE was a garden planned in Spring's young
days,
Then Summer held it in her bounteous hand,
And many wandered through its blooming ways,
But ne'er the one for whom the work was planned.
And it was vainly done —
For what are many, if we lack the one?

There was a song that lived within the heart
Long time — and then on Music's wing it strayed!
All sing it now, all praise its artless art,
But ne'er the one for whom the song was made.
And it was vainly done —
For what are many, if we lack the one!

Edith M. Thomas

"OH, THE BURDEN, THE BURDEN OF LOVE UNGIVEN"

Oh, the burden, the burden of love ungiven,
The weight of laughter unshed,
Oh, heavy caresses, unblown tendernesses,
Oh, love-words unsung and unsaid.

Oh, the burden, the burden of love unspoken,
The cramp of silence close-furled,
To lips that would utter, to hands that would scatter
Love's seed on the paths of the world.

Oh, the heavy burden of love ungiven:
My breast doth this burden bear;
Deep in my bosom the unblown blossom—
My world-love that withers there.

Grace Fallow Norton

"I SAT AMONG THE GREEN LEAVES"

I SAT among the green leaves, and heard the nuts falling,
The blood-red butterflies were gold against the sun,
But in between the silence and the sweet birds calling
The nuts fell one by one.

Why should they fall and the year but half over?
Why should sorrow seek me and I so young and kind?
The leaf is on the bough and the dew is on the clover,
But the green nuts are falling in the wind.

Oh, I gave my lips away and all my soul behind them.
Why should trouble follow and the quick tears start?
The little birds may love and fly with only God to mind them,
But the green nuts are falling on my heart.

Marjorie L. C. Pickthall

IN THE PARK

He whistled soft whistlings I knew were for me,
Teasing, endearing.
Won't you look? was what they said,
But I did not turn my head.
(Only a little I turned my hearing.)

My feet took me by;
Straight and evenly they went:
As if they had not dreamed what he meant:
As if such a curiosity
Never were known since the world began
As woman wanting man!

My heart led me past and took me away;
And yet it was my heart that wanted to stay.

Helen Hoyt

THE ENCHANTED SHEEP-FOLD

The hills far-off were blue, blue,
 The hills at hand were brown;
And all the herd-bells called to me
 As I came by the down.

The briars turned to roses — roses,
 Ever we stayed to pull
A white little rose, and a red little rose,
 And a lock of silver wool.

Nobody heeded, — none, none;
 And when True Love came by,
They thought him nought but the shepherd-boy.
 Nobody knew but I!

The trees were feathered like birds, birds;
 Birds were in every tree.
Yet nobody heeded, nobody heard,
 Nobody knew, save we.

And he is fairer than all, — all.
How could a heart go wrong?
For his eyes I knew, and his knew mine,
Like an old, old song.

Josephine Preston Peabody

A BIRTHDAY

My heart is like a singing bird
 Whose nest is in a watered shoot:
My heart is like an apple tree
 Whose boughs are bent with thickset fruit;
My heart is like a rainbow shell
 That paddles in a halcyon sea;
My heart is gladder than all these
 Because my love is come to me.

Raise me a dais of silk and down;
 Hang it with vair and purple dyes;
Carve it in doves and pomegranates,
 And peacocks with a hundred eyes;
Work it in gold and silver grapes,
 In leaves and silver fleurs-de-lys;
Because the birthday of my life
 Is come, my love is come to me.

Christina Rossetti

FOUND

Oh, when I saw your eyes,
So old it was, so new, the hushed surprise:
After a long, long search, it came to be,
Home folded me.

And looking up, I saw
The far, first stars like tapers to my awe,
In the dim hands of hid, benignant Powers,
At search long hours.

And did they hear us call,
That they have found us children after all?
And did you know, O Wonderful and Dear,
That I was here?

Josephine Preston Peabody

CHOICE

Of all the souls that stand create
I have elected one.
When sense from spirit flies away,
And subterfuge is done;

When that which is and that which was
Apart, intrinsic, stand,
And this brief tragedy of flesh
Is shifted like a sand;

When figures show their royal front
And mists are carved away,—
Behold the atom I preferred
To all the lists of clay!

Emily Dickinson

"SO BEAUTIFUL YOU ARE INDEED"

So beautiful you are, indeed,
That I am troubled when you come,
And though I crave you for my need,
Your nearness strikes me blind and dumb.

And when you bring your lips to mine
My spirit trembles and escapes,
And you and I are turned divine,
Bereft of our familiar shapes.

And fearfully we tread cold space,
Naked of flesh and winged with flame,
. . . Until we find us face to face,
Each calling on the other's name!

Irene Rutherford McLeod

AN INCANTATION

O STRONG sun of heaven, harm not my love,
Sear him not with your flame, blind him not with
your beauty,
Shine for his pleasure!

O gray rains of heaven, harm not my love,
Drown not in your torrent the song of his heart,
Lave and caress him!

O swift winds of heaven, harm not my love,
Bruise not nor buffet him with your rough humor,
Sing you his prowess!

O mighty triad, strong ones of heaven,
Sun, rain and wind, be gentle, I charge you;
For your mad mood of wrath have me, I am ready—
But spare him, my lover, most proud and most
dear—
O sun, rain and wind, strong ones of heaven!

Marguerite Wilkinson

LOVE SONG

THERE is a strong wall about me to protect me:
It is built of the words you have said to me.

There are swords about me to keep me safe:
They are the kisses of your lips.

Before me goes a shield to guard me from harm:
It is the shadow of your arms between me and
danger.

All the wishes of my mind know your name,
And the white desires of my heart
They are acquainted with you.
The cry of my body for completeness,
That is a cry to you.
My blood beats out your name to me, unceasing,
pitiless —
Your name, your name.

Mary Carolyn Davies

THE HEART'S COUNTRY

Hill people turn to their hills;
Sea folk are sick for the sea:
Thou art my land and my country,
And my heart calls out for thee.

The bird beats his wings for the open,
The captive burns to be free;
But I — I cry at thy window,
For thou art my liberty.

Florence Wilkinson

RHAPSODY

As the mother bird to the waiting nest,
 As the regnant moon to the sea,
As joy to the heart that hath first been blest —
 So is my love to me.

Sweet as the song of the lark that soars
 From the net of the fowler free,
Sweet as the morning that song adores —
 So is my love to me!

As the rose that blossoms in matchless grace
 Where the canker may not be,
As the well that springs in a desert place —
 So is my love to me.

Florence Earle Coates

"WHEN ON THE MARGE OF EVENING"

WHEN on the marge of evening the last blue light
is broken,
And winds of dreamy odor are loosened from
afar,
Or when my lattice opens, before the lark hath
spoken,
On dim laburnum-blossoms, and morning's dy-
ing star,

I think of thee (oh mine the more if other eyes
be sleeping!)
Whose greater noonday splendors the many
share and see,
While sacred and forever, some perfect law is keep-
ing
The late, the early twilight, alone and sweet for
me.

Louise Imogen Guiney

"BELOVÈD, MY BELOVÈD, WHEN I THINK"

BELOVÈD, my belovèd, when I think
That thou wast in the world a year ago,
What time I sat alone here in the snow,
And saw no footprint, heard the silence sink
No moment at thy voice, but link by link,
Went counting all my chains as if that so
They never could fall off at any blow
Struck by thy possible hand,—why, thus I drink
Of life's great cup of wonder! Wonderful,
Never to feel thee thrill the day or night
With personal act or speech, nor ever cull
Some prescience of thee with the blossoms white
Thou sawest growing! Atheists are as dull,
Who cannot guess God's presence out of sight.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

APOLOGY

Be not angry with me that I bear
 Your colors everywhere,
 All through each crowded street,
 And meet
 The wonder-light in every eye,
 As I go by.

Each plodding wayfarer looks up to gaze,
 Blinded by rainbow haze,
 The stuff of happiness,
 No less,
 Which wraps me in its glad-hued folds
 Of peacock golds.

Before my feet the dusty, rough-paved way
 Flushes beneath its gray.
 My steps fall ringed with light,
 So bright,
 It seems a myriad suns are strown
 About the town.

The Answering Voice

Around me is the sound of steepled bells,
And rich perfumèd smells
Hang like a wind-forgotten cloud,
And shroud
Me from close contact with the world.
I dwell impearled.

You blazon me with jeweled insignia.
A flaming nebula
Rims in my life. And yet
You set
The word upon me, unconfessed
To go unguessed.

Amy Lowell



RAIN

I HAVE always hated the rain,
And the gloom of grayed skies.
But now I think I must always cherish
Rain-hung leaf and the misty river;
And the friendly screen of dripping green
Where eager kisses were shyly given
And your pipe-smoke made clouds in our damp,
close heaven.

The curious laggard passed us by,
His wet shoes soughed on the shining walk.
And that afternoon was filled with a blurred
glory—
That afternoon, when we first talked as lovers.

Jean Starr Untermeyer



THE NAME

I 'VE learned to say it carelessly,
 So no one else can see
By any little look or sign
 How dear it is to me.

But, oh, the thrill, as though you kissed
 My tingling finger-tips
Each time the golden syllables
 Fall lightly from my lips!

Williamina Parrish

"I LEANED OUT MY WINDOW"

I LEANED out my window, I smelt the white clover,
Dark, dark was the garden, I saw not the gate;
Now, if there be footsteps, he comes, my one lover —
Hush, nightingale, hush! Oh, sweet nightingale, wait
Till I listen and hear
If a step draweth near,
For my love he is late!

"The skies in the darkness stoop nearer and nearer,
A cluster of stars hangs like fruit in the tree,
The fall of the water comes sweeter, comes clearer:
To what art thou listening, and what dost thou see?
Let the star-clusters grow,
Let the sweet waters flow,
And cross quickly to me.

The Answering Voice

"You night moths that hover where honey brims over
From sycamore blooms, or settle or sleep;
You glowworms, shine out, and the pathway discover
To him that comes darkling along the rough steep.
Ah, my sailor, make haste,
For the time runs to waste,
And my love lieth deep—

"Too deep for swift telling; and yet, my one lover,
I 've conned thee an answer, it waits thee to-night."
By the sycamore passed he, and through the white clover,
Then all the sweet speech I had fashioned took flight;
But I 'll love him more, more
Than e'er wife loved before,
Be the day dark or bright.

Jean Ingelow

RAIN, RAIN!

Rain, rain, — fall, fall,
In a heavy screen —
That my lover be not seen!

Wind, wind, — blow, blow,
Till the leaves are stirred —
That my lover be not heard!

Storm, storm, — rage, rage,
Like a war around —
That my lover be not found!

. . . Lark, lark, — hush . . . hush . . .
Softer music make —
That my lover may not wake. . . .

Zoë Akins

THE HAWTHORN TREE

Across the shimmering meadows —
Ah, when he came to me!
In the spring-time,
In the night-time,
In the starlight,
Beneath the hawthorn tree.

Up from the misty marshland —
Ah, when he climbed to me!
To my white bower,
To my sweet rest,
To my warm breast,
Beneath the hawthorn tree.

Ask of me what the birds sang,
High in the hawthorn tree;
What the breeze tells,
What the rose smells,
What the stars shine —
Not what he said to me!

Willa Sibert Cather

ECSTASY

Cover mine eyes, O my Love!
Mine eyes that are weary of bliss
As of light that is poignant and strong.
Oh, silence my lips with a kiss,
My lips that are weary of song!

Shelter my soul, O my Love!
My soul is bent low with the pain
And the burden of love, like the grace
Of a flower that is smitten with rain;
Oh, shelter my soul from thy face!

Sarojini Naidu

THE MAN WITH A HAMMER

My Dear was a mason
And I was his stone.
And quick did he fashion
A house of his own.

As fish in the waters,
As birds in a tree,
So natural and blithe lives
His spirit in me.

Anna Wickham

THE GREAT MAN

I CANNOT always feel his greatness.
Sometimes he walks beside me, step by step,
And paces slowly in the ways —
The simple, wingless ways
That my thoughts tread. He gossips with me
then,
And finds it good;
Not as an eagle might, his great wings folded,
be content
To walk a little, knowing it his choice,
But as a simple man,
My friend.
And I forget.

Then suddenly a call floats down
From the clear airy spaces,
The great keen, lonely heights of being.
And he who was my comrade hears the call
And rises from my side, and soars,
Deep-chanting, to the heights.

Then I remember.
And my upward gaze goes with him, and I see
Far off against the sky
The glint of golden sunlight on his wings.

Eunice Tietjens

I KNOW

Oh! I know why the alder trees
 Lean over the reflecting stream;
And I know what the wandering bees
 Heard in the woods of dream.

I know how the uneasy tide
 Answers the signal of the moon,
And why the morning-glories hide
 Their eyes in the forenoon.

And I know all the wild delight
 That quivers in the sea-bird's wings,
For in one little hour last night
 Love told me all these things.

Elsa Barker

REST

As a little child I come
To be gathered to your breast
So tired that my lips are dumb,
So sad that my warm heart is numb:
Belovèd, let me rest.

Oh, how all the noises die,
All the cruel voices cease,
I can sleep when you are by,
And I am too faint to cry:
Here at last is peace.

Hold me, nurse me, love me . . . so . . .
Almost I could learn to weep!
Hush, I feel my spirit grow . . .
When you tire . . . let me go . . .
I shall be . . . asleep.

Irene Rutherford McLeod

"IF THOU MUST LOVE ME, LET IT BE FOR NOUGHT"

If thou must love me, let it be for nought
Except for love's sake only. Do not say,
"I love her for her smile, her look, her way
Of speaking gently, for a trick of thought
That falls in well with mine, and certes brought
A sense of pleasant ease on such a day";
For these things in themselves, belovèd, may
Be changed, or change for thee: and love so wrought
May be unwrought so. Neither love me for
Thine own dear pity's wiping my cheeks dry:
A creature might forget to weep, who bore
Thy comfort long, and lose thy love thereby.
But love me for love's sake, that evermore
Thou mayst love on through love's eternity.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

THE TIRED WOMAN

O MY Lover, blind me,
Take your cords and bind me,
Then drive me through a silent land,
With the compelling of your open hand!

There is too much of sound, too much for sight,
In thunderous lightnings of this night,
There is too much of freedom for my feet,
Bruised by the stones of this disordered street.

I know that there is sweetest rest for me,
In silent fields, and in captivity.
O Lover! drive me through a stilly land,
With the compelling of your open hand.

Anna Wickham

"HOW DO I LOVE THEE?"

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of being and ideal grace.
I love thee to the level of every day's
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.
I love thee freely, as men strive for right.
I love thee purely, as they turn from praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints. I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life; and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

THE TAXI

When I go away from you
The world beats dead
Like a slackened drum.
I call out for you against the jutted stars
And shout into the ridges of the wind.
Streets coming fast,
One after the other,
Wedge you away from me,
And the lamps of the city prick my eyes
So that I can no longer see your face.
Why should I leave you,
To wound myself upon the sharp edges of the night?

Amy Lowell

"YOU SAY THERE IS NO LOVE"

You say there is no love, my love,
 Unless it lasts for aye!
Oh, folly, there are interludes
 Better than the play.

You say lest it endure, sweet love,
 It is not love for aye?
Oh, blind! Eternity can be
 All in one little day.

Grace Fallow Norton

DEBTS

My debt to you, Belovèd,
Is one I cannot pay
In any coin of any realm
On any reckoning day;

For where is he shall figure
The debt, when all is said,
To one who makes you dream again
When all the dreams were dead?

Or where is the appraiser
Who shall the claim compute
Of one who makes you sing again
When all the songs were mute?

Jessie B. Rittenhouse



A WOMAN'S QUESTION

Before I trust my fate to thee,
Or place my hand in thine,
Before I let thy future give
Color and form to mine, —
Before I peril all for thee, question thy soul
to-night, for me.

I break all slighter bonds, nor feel
One shadow of regret:
Is there one link within the past
That holds thy spirit yet?
Or is thy faith as clear and free as that which
I can pledge to thee? . . .

Is there within thy heart a need
That mine cannot fulfill?
One chord that any other hand
Could better wake or still?
Speak now, lest at some future day, my whole
life wither and decay. . . .

The Answering Voice

Couldst thou withdraw thy hand one day,
And answer to my claim
That fate, and that to-day's mistake,
Not thou, had been to blame?
Some soothe their conscience thus; but thou — oh,
surely thou wilt warn me now!

Adelaide Anne Procter

COMRADES

You need not say one word to me, as up the hill we go
(Night-time, white-time, all in the whispering snow);
You need not say one word to me, although the whispering trees
Seem strange and old as pagan priests in swaying mysteries.

You need not think one thought of me, as up the trail we go
(Hill-trail, still-trail, all in the hiding snow);
You need not think one thought of me, although a hare runs by,
And off behind the tumbled cairn we hear a red fox cry.

Oh, good and rare it is to feel, as through the night we go
(Wild-wise, child-wise, all in the secret snow),

The Answering Voice

That we are free of heart and foot as hare and fox
are free,
And yet that I am glad of you, and you are glad
of me!

Fannie Stearns Davis

IN DEEP PLACES

I LOVE thee, dear, and knowing mine own heart
With every beat I give God thanks for this;
I love thee only for the self thou art;
No wild embrace, no wisdom-shaking kiss,
No passionate pleading of a heart laid bare,
No urgent cry of love's extremity —
Strong traps to take the spirit unaware —
Not one of these I ever had of thee.
Neither of passion nor of pity wrought
Is this, the love to which at last I yield,
But shapen in the stillness of my thought
And by a birth of agony revealed.
Here is a thing to live while we do live
Which honors thee to take and me to give.

Amelia Josephine Burr

THAT DAY YOU CAME

Such special sweetness was about
That day God sent you here,
I knew the lavender was out,
And it was mid of year.

Their common way the great winds blew,
The ships sailed out to sea;
Yet ere that day was spent I knew
Mine own had come to me.

As after song some snatch of tune
Lurks still in grass or bough,
So, somewhat of the end o' June
Lurks in each weather now.

The young year sets the buds astir,
The old year strips the trees;
But ever in my lavender
I hear the brawling bees.

Lizette Woodworth Reese

PARTING

My life closed twice before its close;
It yet remains to see
If Immortality unveil
A third event to me.

So huge, so hopeless to conceive,
As these that twice befell;
Parting is all we know of heaven,
And all we need of hell.

Emily Dickinson

AN OLD SONG

And if I came not again
After certain days;
If no morning sun or rain
Met me on their ways;

If the meadows knew no more
How my feet go free,
And the folded hills forbore
Any speech of me;

If you did not find me here,
At the door at night,
And the cold hearth kept no cheer,
And the panes no light;—

Oh, if I came not again,
Would you miss me much?
Would your fingers once be fain
Of my wandering touch?

An Old Song

Would you dream me at your side
In the waking wood,
Where the old spring hungers hide
In blue solitude?

Would you wonder where I passed,
Into joy or pain?
Oh, to know you cared, at last,
Came I not again!

Fannie Stearns Davis

"I WILL NOT GIVE THEE ALL MY HEART"

I WILL not give thee all my heart
For that I need a place apart
To dream my dreams in, and I know
Few sheltered ways for dreams to go:
But when I shut the door upon
Some secret wonder — still, withdrawn —
Why dost thou love me even more,
And hold me closer than before?

When I of Love demand the least,
Thou biddest him to fire and feast:
When I am hungry and would eat,
There is no bread, though crusts were sweet.
If I with manna may be fed,
Shall I go all uncomforted?
Nay! Howsoever dear thou art,
I will not give thee all my heart.

Grace Hazard Conkling

GIFTS

You ask me what — since we must part —
 You shall bring back to me.
Bring back a pure and faithful heart
 As true as mine to thee.

You talk of gems from foreign lands,
 Of treasure, spoil, and prize.
Ah love! I shall not search your hands
 But look into your eyes.

Juliana Horatia Ewing

MENACE

I CAME into your room and spoke.
Sudden I knew you were not there.
The easy, common sentence broke
Against the unanswering air.

My heart shook like a frightened bird,
And to my ear the terror said,
Where nothing spoke and nothing stirred,—
Dear God, if he were dead!

I heard your footstep in the house,
Your voice brought comfort to my fear.
But, fluttering like a frightened mouse,
My heart beat at my ear.

The room wore its familiar face;
On the warm hearth spirted the flame.
Yet — menace of an empty place —
Lord, if he never came!

Katharine Tynan



LOVE SONG

I LOVE my life, but not too well
To give it to thee like a flower,
So it may pleasure thee to dwell
Deep in its perfume but an hour.
I love my life, but not too well.

I love my life, but not too well
To sing it note by note away,
So to thy soul the song may tell
The beauty of the desolate day.
I love my life, but not too well.

I love my life, but not too well
To cast it like a cloak on thine,
Against the storms that sound and swell
Between thy lonely heart and mine.
I love my life, but not too well.

Harriet Monroe

POSSESSION

WALK into the world,
Go into the places of trade;
Go into the smiling country—
But go, clad, wrapped closely always,
Shielded and sustained,
In the visible flame of my love.

Let it blaze about you—
A glowing armor for all to see;
Flashing around your head—
A tender and valiant halo.

I think there will be many to wonder
And many to stand in awe and envy—
But surely no one will come too close to you.
No one will dare to claim you,—
Hand or heart,—
As you pass in your shining and terrible garment.

Jean Starr Untermeyer



"YET FOR ONE ROUNDED MOMENT"

YET for one rounded moment I will be
No more to you than what my lips may give,
And in the circle of your kisses live
As in some island of a storm-blown sea,
Where the cold surges of infinity
Upon the outward reefs unheeded grieve,
And the loud murmur of our blood shall weave
Primeval silences round you and me.

If in that moment we are all we are,
We live enough. Let this for all requite.
Do I not know, some wingèd things from far
Are borne along illimitable night
To dance their lives out in a single flight
Between the moonrise and the setting star?

Edith Wharton

INSUFFICIENCY

I

THERE is no one beside thee, and no one above thee;
Thou standest alone, as the nightingale sings!
And my words that would praise thee are impotent things,
For none can express thee, though all should approve thee.
I love thee so, dear, that I only can love thee.

II

Say, what can I do for thee? Weary thee, grieve thee?
Lean on thy shoulder, new burdens to add?
Weep my tears over thee, making thee sad?
Oh, hold me not, love me not! let me retrieve thee.
I love thee so, dear, that I only can leave thee.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning



"I MUST NOT YIELD"

I MUST not yield . . . but if he would not sing!
 My stilling hands upon my breast can feel
Its answer tremble like a muted string.
 Below the vaulted window where I kneel

He sings, he sings, to stars and listening skies.
 A white and haunted place my garden seems.—
I see the pleading beauty of his eyes
 As faces glimmer in a pool of dreams.

So wooing wind might sweep a harp awake.
 (Oh, muting fingers on each quivering string!)
I must not yield . . . I think my heart will break.
 Mother of Heaven, if he would not sing!

Nora May French



"GO FROM ME"

Go from me. Yet I feel that I shall stand
Henceforward in thy shadow. Nevermore
Alone upon the threshold of my door
Of individual life, I shall command
The uses of my soul, nor lift my hand
Serenely in the sunshine as before,
Without the sense of that which I forbore, —
Thy touch upon the palm. The widest land
Doom takes to part us leaves thy heart in mine
With pulses that beat double. What I do
And what I dream include thee, as the wine
Must taste of its own grapes. And, when I sue
God for myself, he hears that name of thine,
And sees within my eyes the tears of two.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

RENOUNCEMENT

I MUST not think of thee; and, tired yet strong,
I shun the thought that lurks in all delight —
The thought of thee — and in the blue Heaven's height,
And in the sweetest passage of a song.

Oh, just beyond the fairest thoughts that throng
This breast, the thought of thee waits, hidden yet bright;
But it must never, never come in sight;
I must stop short of thee the whole day long.

But when sleep comes to close each difficult day,
When night gives pause to the long watch I keep,
And all my bonds I needs must loose apart,

Must doff my will as raiment laid away, —
With the first dream that comes with the first sleep
I run, I run, I am gathered to thy heart.

Alice Meynell

A FAREWELL

GOOD-BYE! — no, do not grieve that it is over,
The perfect hour;
That the winged joy, sweet honey-loving rover,
Flits from the flower.

Grieve not — it is the law. Love will be flying —
Yes, love and all.
Glad was the living — blessed be the dying.
Let the leaves fall.

Harriet Monroe

LOVE'S CHANGE

I WENT to dig a grave for Love,
But the earth was so stiff and cold
That, though I strove through the bitter night,
I could not break the mould.

And I said: "Must he lie in my house in state,
And stay in his wonted place?
Must I have him with me another day,
With that awful change in his face?"

Anne Reeve Aldrich

WHEN PLAINTIVELY AND NEAR THE CRICKET SINGS

Now evening comes. Now stirs my discontent . . .
Oh, ache of smallest, unforgotten things!
How sharp you are when day and dark are blent,
When beetles hurry by with vibrant wings,
And plaintively and near the cricket sings.

The sighing garden calls me from the door;
Above the hills a little crescent swings —
Above the path where you will come no more
When beetles hurry by on vibrant wings,
And plaintively and near the cricket sings.

Nora May French

"COME BACK TO ME"

COME back to me, who wait and watch for you: —
Or come not yet, for it is over then,
And long it is before you come again,
So far between my pleasures are and few.
While, when you come not, what I do I do
Thinking, "Now when he comes," my sweetest
"when":
For one man is my world of all the men
This wide world holds; O love, my world is you.
Howbeit, to meet you grows almost a pang
Because the pang of parting comes so soon;
My hope hangs waning, waxing, like a moon
Between the heavenly days on which we meet:
Ah me, but where are now the songs I sang
When life was sweet because you called them
sweet?

Christina Rossetti

ASHES OF LIFE

Love has gone and left me and the days are all alike;
Eat I must, and sleep I will, — and would that night were here!
But ah! — to lie awake and hear the slow hours strike!
Would that it were day again! — with twilight near!

Love has gone and left me and I don't know what to do;
This or that or what you will is all the same to me;
But all the things that I begin I leave before I 'm through, —
There 's little use in anything as far as I can see.

Love has gone and left me, and the neighbors knock and borrow,

Ashes of Life

And life goes on forever like the gnawing of a
mouse, —
And to-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow
and to-morrow
There 's this little street and this little house.

Edna St. Vincent Millay

THE CYNIC

I SAY it to comfort me over and over,
Having a querulous heart to beguile,
Never had woman a tenderer lover —
For a little while.

Oh, there never were eyes more eager to read her
In her saddest mood or her moments gay,
Oh, there never were hands more strong to lead her —
For a little way.

There never were loftier promises given
Of love that should guard her the ages through,
As great, enduring and steadfast as Heaven —
For a week or two.

Well, end as it does, I have had it, known it,
For this shall I turn me to weep or pray?
Nay, rather I laugh that I thought to own it
For more than a day.

Theodosia Garrison

SEA SONG

AGAINST the planks of the cabin side
(So slight a thing between them and me),
The great waves thundered and throbbed and sighed,
The great green waves of the Indian Sea!

Your face was white as the foam is white,
Your hair was curled as the waves are curled,
I would we had steamed and reached that night
The sea's last edge, the end of the world.

The wind blew in through the open port,
So freshly joyous and salt and free,
Your hair it lifted, your lips it sought,
And then swept back to the open sea.

The engines throbbed with their constant beat;
Your heart was nearer, and all I heard;
Your lips were salt, but I found them sweet,
While, acquiescent, you spoke no word.

The Answering Voice

So straight you lay in your narrow berth,
 Rocked by the waves; and you seemed to be
Essence of all that is sweet on earth,
 Of all that is sad and strange at sea.

And you were white as the foam is white,
 Your hair was curled as the waves are curled.
Ah! had we but sailed and reached that night,
 The sea's last edge, the end of the world!

Laurence Hope

RISPETTO

I

WHAT good is there, ah me, what good in Love?
Since, even if you love me, we must part;
And since for either, an' you cared enough,
There 's but division and a broken heart?

And yet, God knows, to hear you say: My Dear!
I would lie down and stretch me on the bier.
And yet would I, to hear you say: My Own!
With mine own hands drag down the burial stone.

A. Mary F. Robinson

RISPETTO

II

Let us forget we loved each other much,
 Let us forget we ever have to part,
Let us forget that any look or touch
 Once let in either to the other's heart.

Only we 'll sit upon the daisied grass
And hear the larks and see the swallows pass;
Only we 'll live awhile, as children play,
Without to-morrow, without yesterday.

A. Mary F. Robinson

RISPETTO

III

Ah, Love, I cannot die, I cannot go
 Down in the dark and leave you all alone,
Ah, hold me fast, safe in the warmth I know,
 And never shut me underneath a stone.

Dead in the grave! And I can never hear
If you are ill, or if you miss me, dear,
Dead, oh, my God! and you may need me yet,
While I shall sleep, while I — while I — forget!

A. Mary F. Robinson

"MANY IN AFTERTIMES WILL SAY"

MANY in aftertimes will say of you,
"He loved her" — while of me what will they say?
Not that I loved you more than just in play,
For fashion's sake as idle women do.
Even let them prate; who know not what we knew
Of love and parting in exceeding pain,
Of parting hopeless here to meet again,
Hopeless on earth, and heaven is out of view.
But by my heart of love laid bare to you,
My love that you can make not void nor vain,
Love that foregoes you but to claim anew
Beyond this passage of the gate of death,
I charge you at the Judgment make it plain
My love of you was life and not a breath.

Christina Rossetti

"WHEN WE SHALL BE DUST"

When we shall be dust in the churchyard —
 In twenty years — in fifty years —
Who will remember you kissed me once,
 Who will be grieved for our tears?

The locust tree will have grown taller,
 The old walks will be covered with grass,
And past our quiet graves go straying
 A youth with his arm round his lass.

And the bee that shall suck your grave flowers —
 Anemone, stock, columbine,
May pause in his swift homing journey
 To taste of the honey from mine.

Muna Lee

I AM THE WIND

I AM the wind that wavers,
You are the certain land;
I am the shadow that passes
Over the sand.

I am the leaf that quivers,
You — the unshaken tree;
You are the stars that are steadfast,
I am the sea.

You are the light eternal,
Like a torch I shall die. . . .
You are the surge of deep music,
I — but a cry!

Zoë Akins

SERVICE

If I could only serve him,
How sweet this life would be.
Last night I dreamed my darling,
Alive, returned to me.

I brought him from the cupboard
The things he liked to eat, —
The little piece of honey,
The rye bread and the meat.

I sang the song he asked for
The night he went away.
How was it, when I loved him,
I could have said him nay!

I took the time to please him,
With a hand upon his brow.
Amid the awful leisure
There was no hurry now.

The Answering Voice

How strange I once denied him
 What took so little while.
A kiss would seem so simple,
 So slight a thing a smile.

With pleased sweet looks of wonder
 He took what I could give, —
Such words as we deny them
 Only because they live.

The pale light of the morning
 Shone in upon the wall.
Come back to me, my darling,
 And I will give you all.

Anna Hempstead Branch

PARTING

DEAR Love, it was so hard to say
Good-bye to-day!
You turned to go, yet going turned to stay!
Till suddenly at last you went away.

Then all at last I found my love unsaid,
And bowed my head;
And went in tears up to my lonely bed —
Oh, would it be like this if you were dead?

Alice Freeman Palmer

FRIENDSHIP AFTER LOVE

After the fierce midsummer all ablaze
Has burned itself to ashes, and expires
In the intensity of its own fires,
There come the mellow, mild, St. Martin days
Crowned with the calm of peace, but sad with haze;
So after Love has led us, till he tires
Of his own throes, and torments, and desires
Comes large-eyed friendship; with a restful gaze,
He beckons us to follow, and across
Cool, verdant vales we wander free from care —
Is it a touch of frost lies in the air?
Why are we haunted with a sense of loss?
We do not wish the pain back, or the heat;
And yet, and yet, these days are incomplete.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox

THE MESSAGE

"Oh, have you not a message, you who come over
the sea?
Have you not a message or word at all for me?"

"I have sailed, sailed, sailed where the seas are
green and blue,
I've silver, gold and merchandise — but never a
word for you."

"But did you see my love by any way you came?
For if you saw my love, he must have spoke my
name."

"Oh, yes, I saw your love — oh, yes, and he was gay
Riding in his coach-and-six all on his birthday."

"But when you spoke of me, of me — oh! what
was it he said?"
"Oh, he never said a word at all, but turned away
his head."

Margaret Sackville

THE OTHER

I AM the Other — I who come
To heal the wound she gave,
The wound that struck your fond words dumb,
And left your world a grave.

What though you loved her — I love you,
And so the most is said,
Here is my yearning heart, still true
To yours her frailty bled.

(But oh! the bitter grief that I
Kept hushed, the wild despair,
When your dear eyes had passed me by
To find her face so fair.)

Now she hath gone her cruel way,
And I am come again,
To seek among the husks to-day,
For one sweet golden grain.

The Other

Because in me Love's strength is great,
Too great for pride, or sin,
I knock upon your heart's barred gate,
And pray you let me in.

Ethna Carbery



THE RAINBOW

WHOSE doorway was it, in the sordid street,
That gave us shelter from the sudden rain,—
Two vagrant sparrows on a dripping branch,
Waiting a moment to spread wing again?

The beggar children danced through pavement pools
Barefoot and joyous, splashing at their will;
The rain washed green that dusty sycamore
And straws swirled wildly down the gutter's rill.

Fast-breathing from the run, our hands still clasped,
We leaned out laughing, shaking free our hair
Of dewy drops, while still the clouds poured down
A freshness that made heavenly the air.

Then we both saw, above the sodden world,
The Rainbow like a miracle appear,
And you said, whispering, "Oh, kiss me once
Before it fades!"—"Kiss me then quickly,
Dear!"

The Rainbow

One warm sweet touch of lips — then forth we went
Oblivious of all the rain and wet.
To-day I saw a rainbow after rain. . . .
My heart remembered then — does yours forget?

Vine Colby

LOVE CAME BACK AT FALL O' DEW

Love came back at fall o' dew,
Playing his old part;
But I had a word or two
That would break his heart.

"He who comes at candle-light,
That should come before,
Must betake him to the night
From a barrèd door."

This the word that made us part
In the fall o' dew;
This the word that brake his heart—
Yet it brake mine, too.

Lizette Woodworth Reese

FROM A CAR-WINDOW

Pines, and a blur of lithe young grasses;
Gold in a pool, from the western glow;
Spread of wings where the last thrush passes—
And thoughts of you as the sun dips low.

Quiet lane, and an irised meadow . . .
(*How many summers have died since then?*) . . .
I wish you knew how the deepening shadow
Lies on the blue and green again!

Dusk, and the curve of field and hollow
Etched in gray when a star appears:
Sunset, . . . twilight, . . . and dark to follow, . . .
And thoughts of you through a mist of tears.

Ruth Guthrie Harding

THE SILLER CROWN

"And ye sall walk in silk attire,
And siller hae to spare,
Gin ye 'll consent to be his bride,
Nor think o' Donald mair."

O, wha wad buy a silken gown
Wi' a puir broken heart?
Or what 's to me a siller crown
Gin frae my love I part?

The mind whose meanest wish is pure
Far dearest is to me,
And ere I 'm forced to break my faith,
I 'll lay me down and dee.

For I hae vowed a virgin's vow
My lover's faith to share,
An' he has gi'en to me his heart,
An' what can man do mair?

The Siller Crown

His mind and manners won my heart,
 He gratefu' took the gift,
An' did I wish to seek it back
 It wad be waur than theft.

The langest life can ne'er repay
 The love he bears to me,
And ere I 'm forced to break my faith,
 I 'll lay me down an' dee.

Susanna Blamire

"CUTTIN' RUSHES"

Oh, maybe it was yesterday, or fifty years ago!
Meself was risin' early on a day for cuttin' rushes.
Walkin' up the Brabla' burn, still the sun was low,
Now I 'd hear the burn run an' then I 'd hear the thrushes.
Young, still young! — and drenchin' wet the grass,
Wet the golden honeysuckle hangin' sweetly down;
Here, lad, here! will ye follow where I pass,
An' find me cuttin' rushes on the mountain.

Then was it only yesterday, or fifty years or so?
Rippin' round the bog pools high among the heather,
The hook it made me hand sore, I had to leave it go,
'T was he that cut the rushes then for me to bind together.
Come, dear, come! — an' back along the burn

"Cuttin' Rushes"

See the darlin' honeysuckle hangin' like a crown.
Quick, one kiss, — sure, there 's some one at the turn!
"Oh, we 're afther cuttin' rushes on the mountain."

Yesterday, yesterday, or fifty years ago. . . .
I waken out o' dreams when I hear the summer thrushes.
Oh, that 's the Brabla' burn, I can hear it sing an' flow,
For all that 's fair I 'd sooner see a bunch o' green rushes.
Run, burn, run! can ye mind when we were young?
The honeysuckle hangs above, the pool is dark an' brown:
Sing, burn, sing! can ye mind the song ye sung
The day we cut the rushes on the mountain?

Moira O'Neill

TO A LATE COMER

WHY didst thou come into my life so late?
If it were morning I could welcome thee
With glad all-hails, and bid each hour to be
The willing servitor of thine estate,
Lading thy brave ships with Time's richest freight;
If it were noonday I might hope to see
On some fair height thy banners floating free,
And hear the acclaiming voices call thee great!
But it is nightfall and the stars are out;
Far in the west the crescent moon hangs low,
And near at hand the lurking shadows wait;
Darkness and silence gather round about,
Lethe's black stream is near its overflow, —
Ah, friend, dear friend, why didst thou come
so late?

Julia C. R. Dorr

CARNATIONS

Carnations and my first love! And he was seventeen,
And I was only twelve years — a stately gulf between!
I broke them on the morning the school-dance was to be,
To pin among my ribbons in hopes that he might see. . . .
And all the girls stood breathless to watch as he came through
With curly crest and grand air that swept the heart from you!
And why he paused at my side is more than I can know —
Shyest of the small girls who all adored him so —
I said it with my prayer-times: I walked with head held high:
"*Carnations are your flower!*" he said as he strode by.

Carnations and my first love! The years are passed a score,
And I recall his first name, and scarce an eyelash more. . . .
And those were all the love-words that either of us said —
Perhaps he may be married — perhaps he may be dead.
And yet, . . . to smell carnations, their spicy, heavy sweet,
Perfuming all some sick-room, or passing on the street,
Then . . . still the school-lamps flicker, and still the Lancers play,
And still the girls hold breathless to watch him go his way,
And still my child-heart quivers with that first ecstasy —
"*Carnations are your flower!*" my first love says to me!

Margaret Widdemer

A REMINISCENCE

It is so long gone by, and yet
 How clearly now I see it all!
The glimmer of your cigarette,
 The little chamber, narrow and tall.

Perseus; your picture in its frame;
 (How near they seem and yet how far!)
The blaze of kindled logs; the flame
 Of tulips in a mighty jar.

Florence and spring-time: surely each
 Glad things unto the spirit saith.
Why did you lead me in your speech
 To these dark mysteries of death?

Amy Levy

DIRGE

NEVER the nightingale;
Oh, my dear,
Never again the lark,
Thou wilt hear.
Though dusk and the morning still
Tap at thy window-sill,
Though ever love call and call,
Thou wilt not hear at all,
My dear, my dear.

Adelaide Crapsey

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

"TO-DAY I WENT AMONG THE MOUNTAIN FOLK"

To-day I went among the mountain folk
To hear the gentle talk most dear to me.
I saw slow tears, and tenderness that woke
From sternest bed to light a lamp for thee.
And "Is it true?" hope asked and asked again,
And "It is true," was all that I could say,
And pride rose over love to hide gray pain
As eyes tears might ungrace were turned away.
So much they loved thee I was half decoyed
By human warmth to feel thee near, but when
I put my hand out all the earth was void,
And vanished even these near-weeping men.
Thus each new time I find that thou art gone,
Anew do I survive the world, alone.

Olive Tilford Dargan

AN APRIL GHOST

All the ghosts I ever knew,
White, and thinly calling,
Come into the house with you,
When the dew is falling.

All of youth that ever died,
In the Spring-time weather,
In the windy April tide,
Climb the dusk together.

For a moment, lad and maid
Stand up there all lonely;
In a moment fade and fade—
You are left, you only.

Lizette Woodworth Reese

THE DEEP-SEA PEARL

The love of my life came not
As love unto others is cast;
For mine was a secret wound —
But the wound grew a pearl, at last.

The divers may come and go,
The tides, they arise and fall;
The pearl in its shell lies sealed,
And the Deep Sea covers all.

Edith M. Thomas

AULD ROBIN GRAY

When the sheep are in the fauld, when the kye 's
come hame,
And a' the weary warld to rest are gane,
The waes o' my heart fa' in showers frae my ee,
Unkent by my gudeman, wha sleeps sound by
me.

Young Jamie lo'ed me weel, and sought me for his
bride,
But saving ae crown-piece he had naething beside;
To make the crown a pound my Jamie gaed to
sea,
And the crown and the pound — they were baith
for me.

He hadna been gane a twelvemonth and a day,
When my father brake his arm and the cow was
stown away;
My mither she fell sick — my Jamie was at sea,
And auld Robin Gray came a-courting me.

Auld Robin Gray

My father couldna wark — my mither couldna spin —
I toiled day and night, but their bread I couldna win;
Auld Rob maintained them baith, and, wi' tears in his ee,
Said: "Jeanie, O for their sakes, will ye no marry me?"

My heart it said na, and I looked for Jamie back,
But hard blew the winds, and his ship was a wrack;
His ship was a wrack — why didna Jamie dee?
Or why am I spared to cry wae is me?

My father urged me sair — my mither didna speak,
But she looked in my face till my heart was like to break;
They gied him my hand — my heart was in the sea —
And so Robin Gray he was gudeman to me.

I hadna been his wife a week but only four,
When, mournfu' as I sat on the stane at my door,
I saw my Jamie's ghaist, for I couldna think it he,
Till he said: "I 'm come hame, love, to marry thee!"

Oh, sair, sair did we greet, and mickle say of a',
I gied him ae kiss, and bade him gang awa' —
I wish that I were dead, but I 'm na like to dee,
For, though my heart is broken, I 'm but young,
wae is me!

I gang like a ghaist, and I carena much to spin,
I darena think o' Jamie, for that wad be a sin,
But I 'll do my best a gude wife to be,
For, oh! Robin Gray, he is kind to me.

Anne Barnard

FINIS

Even for you I shall not weep
When I at last, at last am dead,
Nor turn and sorrow in my sleep
Though you should linger overhead.

Even of you I shall not dream
Beneath the waving graveyard grass;
One with the soul of wind and stream
I shall not heed you if you pass.

Even for you I would not wake,
Too bitter were the tears I knew,
Too dark the road I needs must take—
The road that winds away from you.

Rosamund Marriott Watson

"GRANDMITHER, THINK NOT I FORGET"

GRANDMITHER, think not I forget, when I come
back to town,
An' wander the old ways again an' tread them up
an' down.
I never smell the clover bloom, nor see the swal-
lows pass,
Without I mind how good ye were unto a little lass.
I never hear the winter rain a-pelting all night
through,
Without I think and mind me of how cold it falls
on you.
And if I come not often to your bed beneath the
thyme,
Mayhap 't is that I 'd change wi' ye, and gie my
bed for thine,
Would like to sleep in thine.

I never hear the summer winds among the roses blow,
Without I wonder why it was ye loved the lassie so.

"Grandmither, Think Not I Forget"

Ye gave me cakes and lollipops and pretty toys a score, —
I never thought I should come back and ask ye now for more.
Grandmither, gie me your still, white hands, that lie upon your breast,
For mine do beat the dark all night and never find me rest;
They grope among the shadows an' they beat the cold black air,
They go seekin' in the darkness, an' they never find him there,
An' they never find him there.

Grandmither, gie me your sightless eyes, that I may never see
His own a-burnin' full o' love that must not shine for me.
Grandmither, gie me your peaceful lips, white as the kirkyard snow,
For mine be red wi' burnin' thirst an' he must never know.
Grandmither, gie me your clay-stopped ears, that I may never hear

The Answering Voice

My lad a-singin' in the night when I am sick wi' fear;
A-singin' when the moonlight over a' the land is white —
Oh God! I'll up an' go to him a-singin' in the night,
A-callin' in the night.

Grandmither, give me your clay-cold heart that has forgot to ache,
For mine be fire within my breast and yet it cannot break.
It beats an' throbs forever for the things that must not be, —
An' can ye not let me creep in an' rest awhile by ye?
A little lass afeared o' dark slept by ye years agone —
Ah, she has found what night can hold 'twixt sunset an' the dawn!
So when I plant the rose an' rue above your grave for ye,
Ye'll know it's under rue an' rose that I would like to be,
That I would like to be.

Willa Sibert Cather

THE PASSER-BY

STEP lightly across the floor,
And somewhat more tender be.

There were many that passed my door,
Many that sought after me.
I gave them the passing word —
Ah, why did I give thee more?
I gave thee what could not be heard,
What had not been given before;
The beat of my heart I gave. . . .
And I give thee this flower on my grave.

My face in the flower thou mayst see.
Step lightly across the floor.

Edith M. Thomas

"WHEN I AM DEAD"

When I am dead, my dearest,
Sing no sad songs for me;
Plant thou no roses at my head,
Nor shady cypress tree:
Be the green grass above me
With showers and dewdrops wet:
And if thou wilt, remember,
And if thou wilt, forget.

I shall not see the shadows,
I shall not feel the rain;
I shall not hear the nightingale
Sing on as if in pain:
And dreaming through the twilight
That doth not rise nor set,
Haply I may remember,
And haply may forget.

Christina Rossetti

REQUIESCAT

Bury me deep when I am dead,
Far from the woods where sweet birds sing;
Lap me in sullen stone and lead,
Lest my poor dust should feel the Spring.

Never a flower be near me set,
Nor starry cup nor slender stem,
Anemone nor violet,
Lest my poor dust remember them.

And you — wherever you may fare —
Dearer than birds, or flowers, or dew —
Never, ah me, pass never there,
Lest my poor dust should dream of you.

Rosamund Marriott Watson

"DOUGLAS, DOUGLAS, TENDER AND TRUE"

COULD ye come back to me, Douglas, Douglas,
In the old likeness that I knew,
I would be so faithful, so loving, Douglas,
Douglas, Douglas, tender and true.

Never a scornful word should grieve ye,
I 'd smile on ye sweet as the angels do; —
Sweet as your smile on me shone ever,
Douglas, Douglas, tender and true.

Oh, to call back the days that are not!
My eyes were blinded, your words were few;
Do you know the truth now up in heaven,
Douglas, Douglas, tender and true?

I never was worthy of you, Douglas;
Not half worthy the like of you:
Now all men beside seem to me like shadows —
I love you, Douglas, tender and true.

Douglas, Douglas, Tender and True

Stretch out your hand to me, Douglas, Douglas,
Drop forgiveness from heaven like dew;
As I lay my heart on your dead heart, Douglas,
Douglas, Douglas, tender and true.

Dinah Mulock Craik

UNWEDDED

ALONG her tranquil way she went,
The slow, sad course of changeless years,
While in her burned her youth unspent,
Dulled sometimes by her gentle tears.

In richer lives she saw the strange,
Sweet urgency of wedded days;
In dreams she watched her pale light change,
Into the steadfast altar blaze.

And, waking, sadly bowed above
Her slender vestal flame and wept;
Ah, better were the house of love,
By blighting fire and tempest swept.

Ada Foster Murray

UNFULFILLED

I READ the pain and pathos of your eyes,
The aftermath of anguish in your smile,
And yet I can but envy you the while!
Your heart has bled, an ardent sacrifice
To Love's fulfillment. You have paid the price
Of keen, fierce living; nor can aught defile
The joys that once have been — they still beguile
The tear-swept memory that Time defies.

My soul's adventure, pallid, incomplete,
Has lingered in the twilight, for my heart
Has dwelt aloof in some dim atmosphere
Betwixt the Earth and Heaven. My alien feet
Have known nor Pain nor its great counterpart.
I, who have never loved, may shed no tear.

Corinne Roosevelt Robinson

A LYNMOUTH WIDOW

He was straight and strong, and his eyes were blue
As the summer meeting of sky and sea,
And the ruddy cliffs had a colder hue
Than flushed his cheek when he married me.

We passed the porch where the swallows breed,
We left the little brown church behind,
And I leaned on his arm, though I had no need,
Only to feel him so strong and kind.

One thing I never can quite forget;
It grips my throat when I try to pray —
The keen salt smell of a drying net
That hung on the churchyard wall that day.

He would have taken a long, long grave —
A long, long grave, for he stood so tall . . .
Oh, God! the crash of a breaking wave,
And the smell of the nets on the churchyard wall!

Amelia Josephine Burr

"LESS THAN THE DUST"

Less than the dust, beneath thy Chariot wheel,
Less than the rust, that never stained thy Sword,
Less than the trust thou hast in me, O Lord,
Even less than these!

Less than the weed, that grows beside thy door,
Less than the speed of hours spent far from thee,
Less than the need thou hast in life of me.
Even less am I.

Since I, O Lord, am nothing unto thee,
See here thy Sword, I make it keen and bright,
Love's last reward, Death, comes to me to-night,
Farewell, Zahir-u-din.

Laurence Hope

NORAH

I KNEW his house by the poplar trees —
Green and silvery in the breeze;

"A heaven-high hedge," were the words he said,
"And holly-hocks — pink and white and red. . . ."

It seemed so far from McChesney's Hall
Where first he told me about it all. . . .

A long path runs inside from the gate,
He still can take it early or late;

But where in the world is a path for me —
Except the river that runs to the sea!

Zoë Akins

THE MAN

THE flame is spent, I can no more
Hold the tall candle by your door;
Too often have I watched to see
Your lagging steps come home to me.

The Tyrian traders taught me this:
They came perfumed with ambergris,
With amethystine robes, and hair
Curled by the kisses of salt air.

They mocked me for my weary hands
Holding your light as love demands;
They sang the lure of poppied sleep,
Their lips were warm, their eyes were deep.

The flame is spent — your pale, weak face
Must seek another resting place;
Win me and hold me now who can —
The Tyrian trader was a man.

Helen Hay Whitney

"UNDER DUSKY LAUREL LEAF"

Under dusky laurel leaf,
 Scarlet leaf of rose,
I lie prone, who have known
 All a woman knows—

Love and grief and motherhood,
 Fame and mirth and scorn;
These are all shall befall
 Any woman born.

Jewel-laden are my hands,
 Tall my stone above;
Do not weep that I sleep
 Who was wise in love;

Where I walk a shadow gray
 Through gray asphodel,
I am glad, who have had
 All that Life could tell.

Margaret Widdemer

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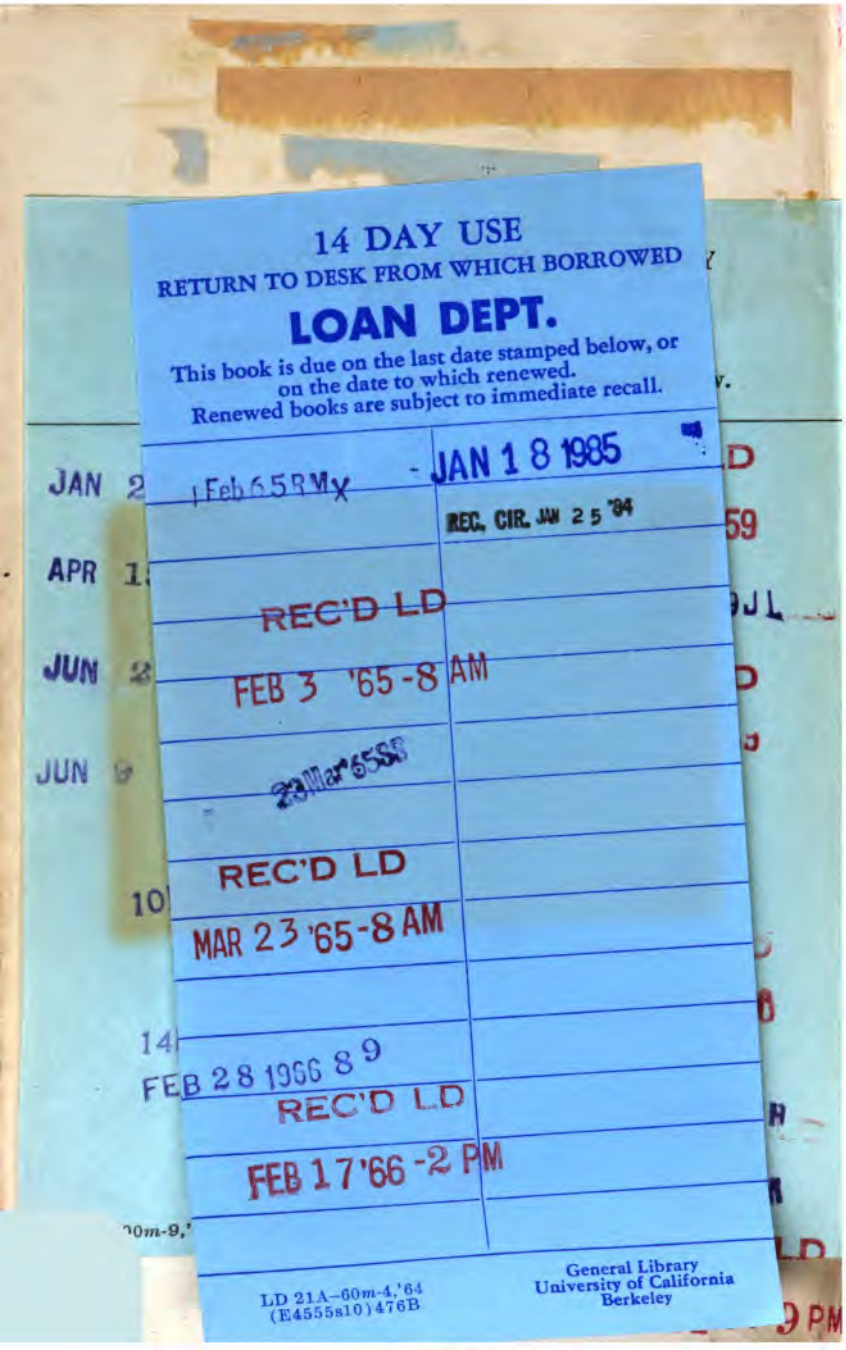
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